

There are No Words

by LBC75

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Summary: After viewing his daughter Annie's body, Sheriff Leigh Brackett's duty goes from protecting the citizens of Haddonfield to the worst assignment imaginable - telling his wife their child is gone.

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The light atop the front step has ceased to glow, effectively communicating that this particular home was no longer a stop for the costumed children of the neighborhood on this All Hallow's Eve, but that absence of illumination could not halt the visit Leigh Brackett never thought he'd have to make.

The sheriff of Haddonfield, a man of calm, clear thought and speech, stares blankly through the steering wheel of his police cruiser into a dash board whose gauges convey no information, no words to help him tell an unspeakable tale.

Brackett's breathing is uneasy as he sits totally enveloped in the crushing silence contained within the shell of his squad car as visions of five-year old Annie smiling a smile of unbridled joy as she clutches a new born puppy consumes his mind. Those thoughts quickly give way to the contented smile of a mother who had everything she'd ever wanted.

The very woman nestled within the serene walls Leigh now stares at with pained eyes as a single question bludgeons him over and over - how do I tell her that our baby is gone and that I couldn't stop it from happening?

Brackett's head turns once more in the direction of the dash and tilts downward as his eyes close. He holds the pose for the briefest of moments, though it feels like hours, takes a deep breath and opens his door.

When it closes with a metal crash, he glances up through the darkness to see a shadow figure moving in the bedroom, his wife getting settled with a good book, as she did every night. Brackett stiffens and swallows uncomfortably at the perception of that window, that room, the woman moving within it he'd not really had before. It was the room where they made Annie. And it will never be the same after tonight. It will no longer be a sanctuary filled with love and heartfelt memories. In a matter of minutes, it will be a symbol of anguish that time, no matter how long, can never erase.

Leigh breathes in deeply, exhales slowly and audibly as he takes his first steps around his vehicle and makes his way onto his front lawn. Brackett stops, breathing and blinking hard with the memory that just hours earlier, he'd told Annie's best friend that it was Halloween, and everyone was entitled to one good scare.

With the nothingness of a vacant street surrounding him, his eyes moistened, Brackett again exhales and runs his hand over his jaw. Only the sound of faint stubble, scattered leaves and the last words he heard his daughter speak echoing through his mind, "Bye, dad."

Leigh looks down into the fading fall grass and watches his own feet make their way to the walkway and onto that darkened front step. His glance slowly makes it way to the door knob. Brackett jerks his head away as a surge of emotion emanates from his throat. He had shared bad news with parents before, doing so with calm and empathy, but as he stood on the precipice of his own home, Leigh was longer a cop. No longer in charge. He was a father who knew that on the other side of that entry way he'd find the love of his life and no amount of training or experience could prepare him for life beyond that door.

Brackett stares down at the stoop one last time, his shoulders hulking with intense breath. Eyes closed, his hand drifts toward the knob. On this chilled October evening, fitting the handle would be icy in his grip as it turned.

End  
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